

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /113 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3222

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 145

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJ: FORMER PRIMIN MUHSIN AL-AYNI FAILS WITH REAPPOINTMENT

REF: SANAA 139 (NOTAL)

1. OTHER INDEPENDENT RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE NOW CONFIRMED TO US THAT PRESIDENT IRYANI HAS FAILED FOR THE TIME BEING IN HIS EFFORTS SECURE REAPPOINTMENT OF MUHSIN AL-AYNI, CURRENTLY AMBASSADOR IN LONDON, AS PRIMIN OF YARG.

2. THERE WERE FROM THE START PLENTY OF FACTIONS ANXIOUS FRUSTRATE PRESIDENT'S WISH: CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY IN THAT BODY, THE NU'MAN CLAN, MODERATE TECHNOCRATIC CABINET MINISTERS, AND TO SOME EXTENT THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP. BUT THERE WERE ALSO POWERFUL PROPONENTS: PRESIDENT IRYANI HIMSELF, AL-AYNI'S BROTHER-IN-LAW HODEIDA GOVERNOR ABU LUHUM, COMMUNISTS, BA'ATHIS AND SELF-PROCLAIMED "PROGRESSIVES", SOME YOUNGER MILITARY, AND CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WERE INSTALLED BY AYNi DURING HIS EARLIER TOUR AS PRIMIN AND WHO RIGHTLY FEAR FOR THEIR POSITIONS. IN FACT, OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT PRO-AL-AYNI FORCES MIGHT HAVE PREVAILED BY A SLIGHT MARGIN THANKS TO PRESIDENT'S SUPPORT HAD CONTEST BEEN DECIDED ON  
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BASIS OF INTERNAL FACTORS ALONE. BUT IT WAS NOT.

3. WE HAVE NOW SUBSTANTIATED REPORTS THAT CHIEF OF STAFF HUSAYN AL-MASWARI, WHO VISITED RIYADH TO ASCERTAIN AG ATTITUDE TOWARD A CONTINUATION OF ITS BUDGET SUBSIDY TO YEMEN IN THE EVENT AL-AYNI WERE REAPPOINTED, RETURNED WITH WHAT AMOUNTED TO AN ABSOLUTE VETO BY KING FAISAL AND MOD PRINCE SULTAN. MASWARI WAS APPARENTLY TOLD THAT YEMEN COULD CHOOSE WHATEVER LEADERSHIP IT WISHED BY YARG SHOULD NOT EXPECT SAG CONTINUE ITS BUDGET SUBSIDY TO A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH IT COULD NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE.

4. THUS, THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN NO CHANGE IN SAG'S ATTITUDE TOWARD AL-AYNI SINCE KING FAISAL'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT IRYANI IN EARLY DECEMBER 1972 WHICH WAS THE CRYSTALLIZING FACTOR IN AL-AYNI'S REMOVAL AT THAT TIME.

5. SAUDI VETO SEEMS TO HAVE TURNED THE TRICK FOR AL-AYNI'S OPPONENTS. WE UNDERSTAND AL-AYNI EXPECTED LEAVE FOR LONDON THIS WEEKEND, VISITING DAMASCUS EN ROUTE.

6. AL-AYNI'S SUPPORTERS ARE GIVING QUITE A DIFFERENT VERSION OF RECENT EVENTS. ACCORDING TO THEIR STORY, AL-AYNI LET HIMSELF BE PERSUADED RETURN TO SANAA FOR CONSULTATIONS TO SEE WHETHER PAST YEAR HAD PRODUCED ENOUGH CHANGES TO JUSTIFY HIS RESUMING OFFICE IN SOME CONFIDENCE THAT HE COULD REALLY INSTALL A PROGRESSIVE, REFORMIST ADMINISTRATION. HIS CONCLUSION AFTER EXTENSIVE SOUNDINGS HAD BEEN THAT HE COULD NOT, THAT PRESIDENT IRYANI WANTED HIS RETURN TO GIVE YARG THE APPEARANCE BUT NOT THE FACT OF PROGRESSIVISM (HE MAY HAVE A POINT THERE) AND THAT INTERVENTIONIST HAND OF SAUDI ARABIA LIES TOO HEAVILY ON YEMEN TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO A TRUENATIONALIST.

7. AL-AYNI AND HIS SUPPORTERS, WE CAN BE SURE, WILL

LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY. WHILE WE DO NOT THINK IT  
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HAS MUCH DEPTH, AL-AYNI CAN NEVERTHELESS COMMAND A FAIRLY IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF SUPPORT, WITNESS THE HORDES OF VISITORS AND SYCOPHANTS WHO GATHERED DAILY IN HIS HOUSE DURING HIS STAY.

8. WE COULD HAVE LIVED WITH AL-AYNI BUT, ON BALANCE, ARE RELIEVED AT THIS OUTCOME. US PROGRAMS HAVE PROBABLY COME TOO FAR TO BE DERAILED SAVE BY A PRIME

MINISTER WILLING TO BE KNOWN FOR OPEN HOSTILITY TO US,  
WHICH AL-AYNI IS CERTAINLY NOT. NEVERTHELESS, WE  
THINK THAT HAD AL-AYNI COME TO OFFICE WE WOULD HAVE  
EXPERIENCED A SUBTLE OPPOSITION AND WOULD HAVE RECEIVED  
NOTHING LIKE THE RATHER REMARKABLE COOPERATION OF THE  
PAST YEAR. PRESENT ALIGNMENT MAY BE FRAGILE  
BUT IT IS OPENLY FRIENDLY AND HAS WORKED HARD TO FACI-  
LITATE ENTRY OF AN EFFECTIVE US PRESENCE.  
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